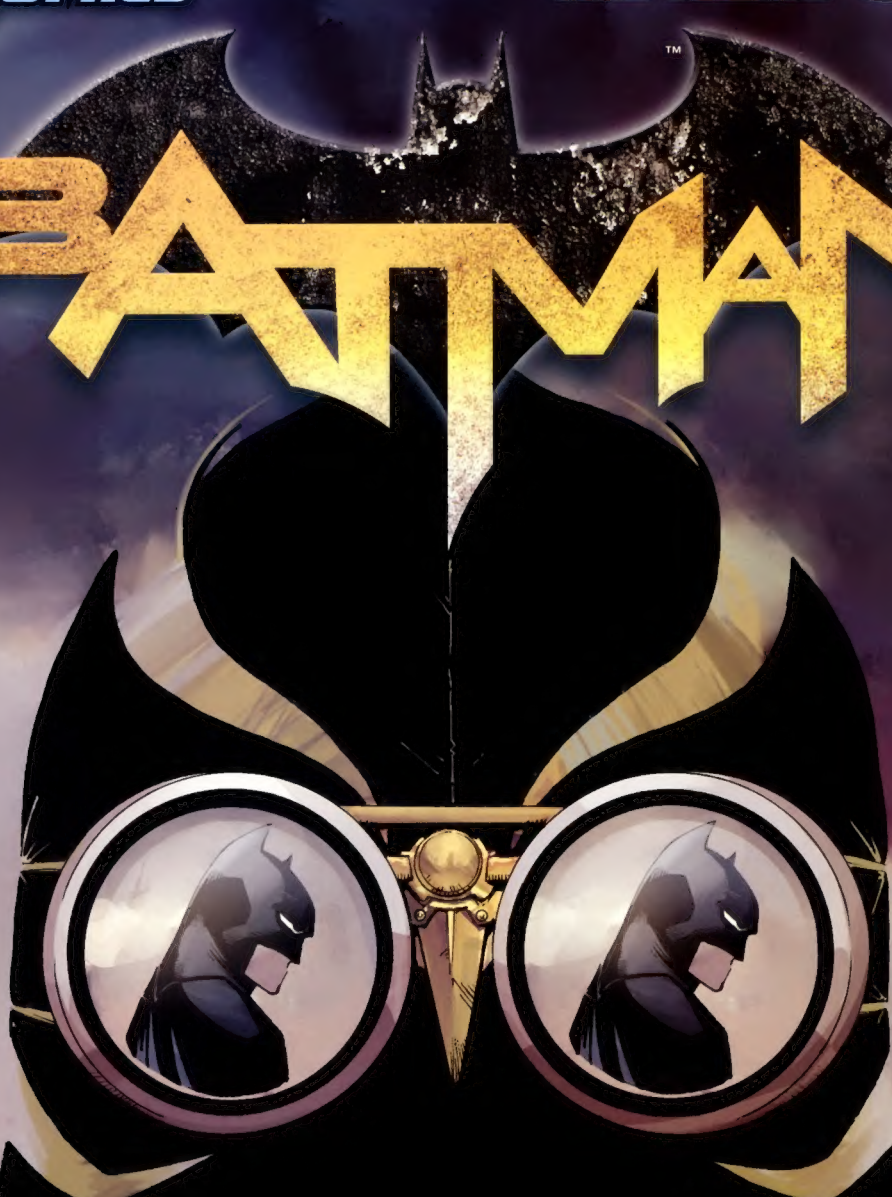


DC COMICS

THE NEW 52!

4
\$2.99
US

BATMAN



DIRECT SALES



7 61941 30640 7

RATED **T** TEEN

FEB 2012

SCOTT
SNYDER
GREG
CAPULLO
JONATHAN
GLAPION

Capullo
11
11/08

DC COMICS

THE NEW 52!

4
\$2.99
US

BATMAN

SCOTT
SNYDER
GREG
CAPULLO
JONATHAN
GLAPION

CHOI

DIRECT SALES



7 61941 30640 7

RATED **T** TEEN

FEB 2012

DC COMICS

THE NEW 52!

4
\$2.99
US

BATMAN



DIRECT SALES



FEB 2012

RATED T TEEN

SCOTT
SNYDER
GREG
CAPULLO
JONATHAN
GLAPION

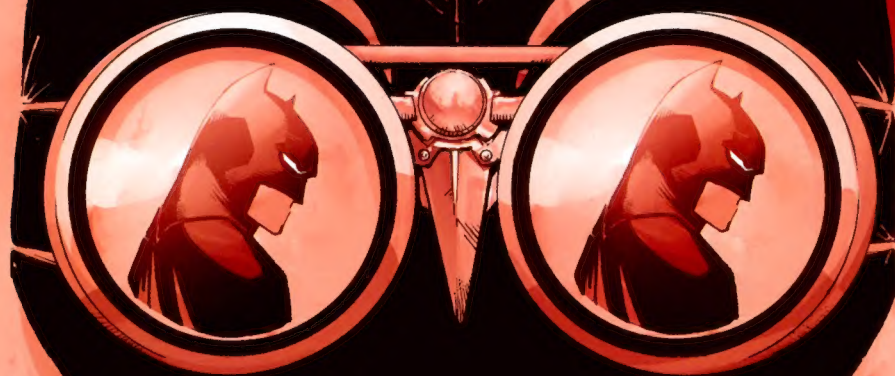
Capullo

DC COMICS

THE NEW 52!

4
\$2.99
US

BATMAN



DIRECT SALES



FEB 2012

RATED **T** TEEN

SCOTT
SNYDER
GREG
CAPULLO
JONATHAN
GLAPION

Capullo
-100



WE CAN BE HEROES

The people of the Horn of Africa need us now.
Help us at www.WeCanBeHeroes.org

DC
COMICS™

THE NEW 52!

4
\$2.99
US

BATMAN™



DIRECT SALES

00413



7 61941 30640 7

MAY 2012

RATED T TEEN

SCOTT
SNYDER
GREG
CAPULLO
JONATHAN
GLAPION

Capullo
+ico



DC
COMICS™

4 | \$2.99
US

THE NEW 52!

BATMAN



DIRECT SALES



AUG 2012

RATED T TEEN

SCOTT
SNYDER
GREG
CAPULLO
JONATHAN
GLAPION

Capullo
ICO

*Most people assume
the danger of a trip-
wire lies in the blast.*





Not so.

UNNH!



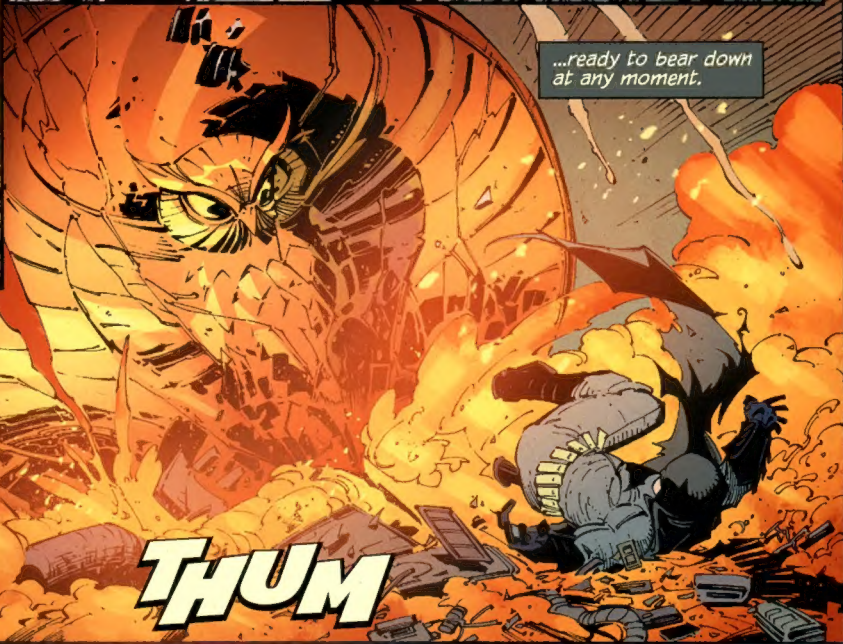
The real threat from a tripwire comes later...



...in the aftermath.


The truth is, a tripwire is a greater instrument of fear than of violence.

It demoralizes and terrorizes everyone in range, suggesting that the enemy knows the terrain better than you do, that this is their home, and they're everywhere at once...



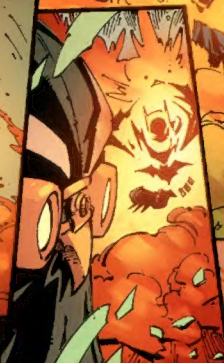


...ready to bear down at any moment.

THUM




In Gotham, there is an old legend, a nursery rhyme about the Court of Owls.

A group of men who, the rhyme goes, rule the city from the shadows and enforce their will by means of an assassin named the Talon...




...a highly trained killer the Court keeps hidden in bases around the city.


CRASH



Tonight, I discovered a series of such bases, seeming to date back to the 19th century--bases hidden in buildings constructed by my own family, the Waynes.



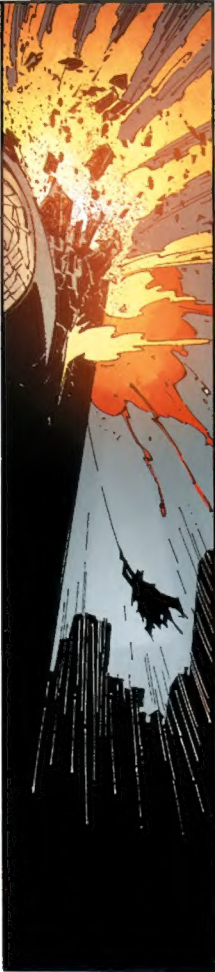
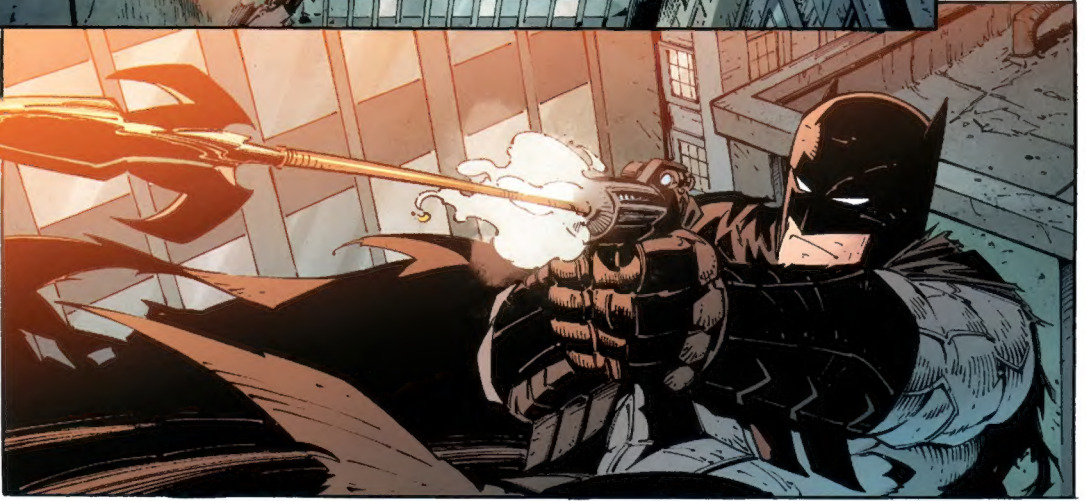
I was inspecting this one, the most recent, when the tripwire went off.



Lucky for me...



...I don't
scare easily.



IF ALL THIS IS
TRUE, THEN THE
END--THE REAL
END--IS NEAR..."



...AND FRANKLY, I JUST CAN'T ACCEPT IT."

"TO BE FAIR, HE *HAS* TAKEN AN EXTRAORDINARY BIT OF PUNISHMENT OF LATE, MASTER RICHARD."

"BRUCE RESTING?"

"IT'S TRUE, SIR."

"AND HOW MANY DO YOU NEED TO SLIP HIM NOWADAYS...?"

"...ALFIE?"

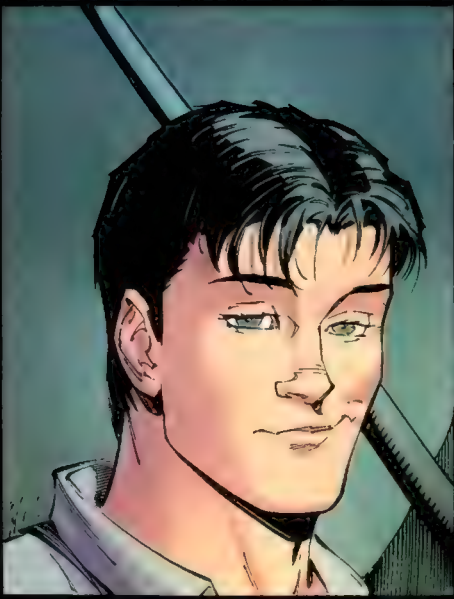
"5 MILLIGRAMS."

"5 MILLIGRAMS OF ACE? THAT'D BRING DOWN A--"

"I'M AWARE OF THE EFFECTS, MASTER RICHARD. NOW, I'M AFRAID I MUST RETURN TO MY DUTIES. IF THERE'S NOTHING ELSE YOU NEED...?"



BRUCE?
BRUCE, ARE YOU AWAKE?



AND ALL IS RIGHT IN THE WORLD.



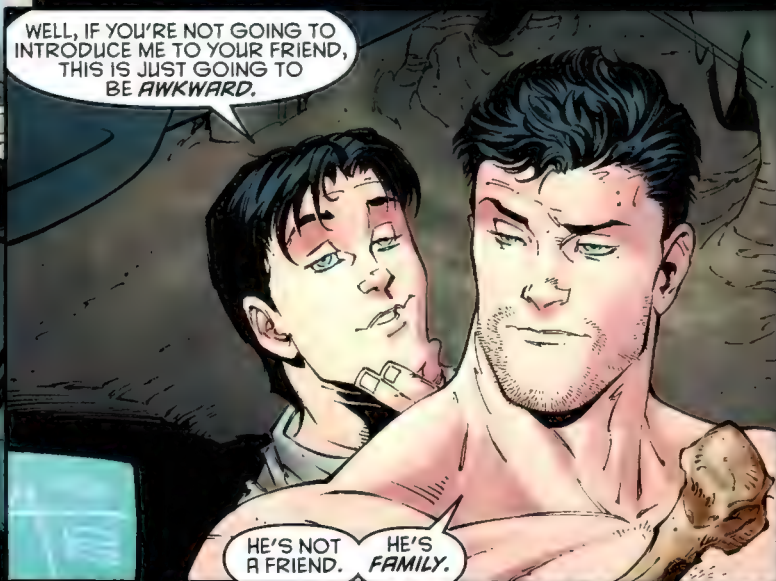
ANALYZE
RESIDUE.

ANALYZING...
METAMORPHIC...



METAMORPHIC?
CONTINUE.

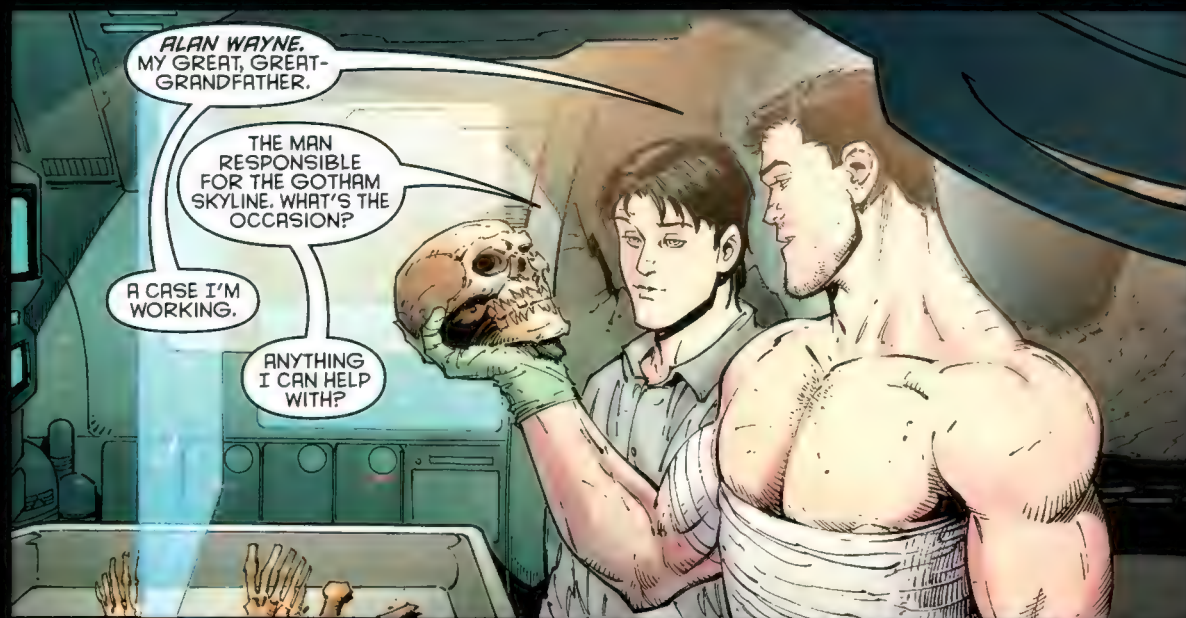
ANALYZING
FURTHER...



WELL, IF YOU'RE NOT GOING TO
INTRODUCE ME TO YOUR FRIEND,
THIS IS JUST GOING TO
BE *AWKWARD*.

HE'S NOT
A FRIEND.

HE'S
FAMILY.



ALAN WAYNE.
MY GREAT, GREAT-
GRANDFATHER.

THE MAN
RESPONSIBLE
FOR THE GOTHAM
SKYLINE. WHAT'S THE
OCCASION?

A CASE I'M
WORKING.

ANYTHING
I CAN HELP
WITH?



I DO...BUT I ALSO KNOW THAT YOU'RE BURNING IT AT **BOTH ENDS** ON THIS ONE. YOU'RE WORKING LIKE A MAN OBSESSED--OR **MORE** OBSESSED THAN USUAL--AND AS SUCH, IT'S POSSIBLE YOU'RE NOT SEEING THE FOREST FOR THE TREES.

ANALYSIS NEARLY COMPLETE...

CONTINUE.

THE POINT IS--

HOLD ON. I WAS TALKING TO THE COMPUTER.

COMPUTER--

BRUCE, WE'RE **WORRIED** ABOUT YOU, ALL RIGHT?

TWICE THIS MONTH YOU CAME CLOSE TO **GETTING KILLED**, AND SOME OF US THINK IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE UNDERESTIMATING YOUR ENEMY HERE.

JIM SAID THAT?

YES, HE DID. THE JOHN DOE WHO CAME UP TO ME--A HIGHLY GHOSTED ID. HE'S KILLED BY AN ASSASSIN CALLING HIMSELF **THE TALON**.

YOU DROP THE GUY OFF A BUILDING AND HE GETS UP AND KILLS HIS RIDE TO THE MORGUE. NOW YOU DISCOVER THESE BASES, HIDDEN IN **WAYNE BUILDINGS**...

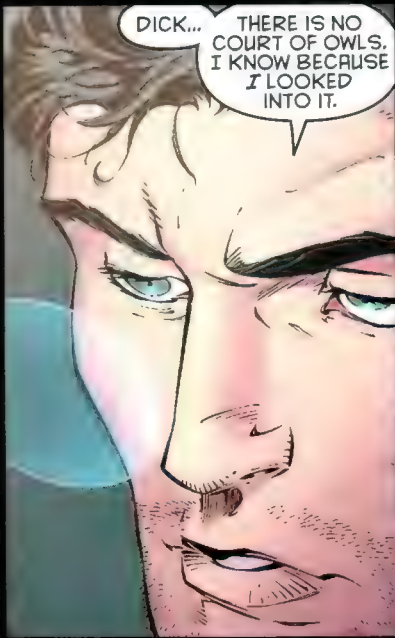
...BASES THAT SEEM TO BE FROM DIFFERENT DECADES DATING BACK TO THE 1800s. HOW CAN YOU **NOT** BE A LITTLE APPREHENSIVE ABOUT WHAT MIGHT BE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE EQUAL SIGN HERE?

I'M BEING OBJECTIVE, DICK. LIKE I TAUGHT YOU TO BE.

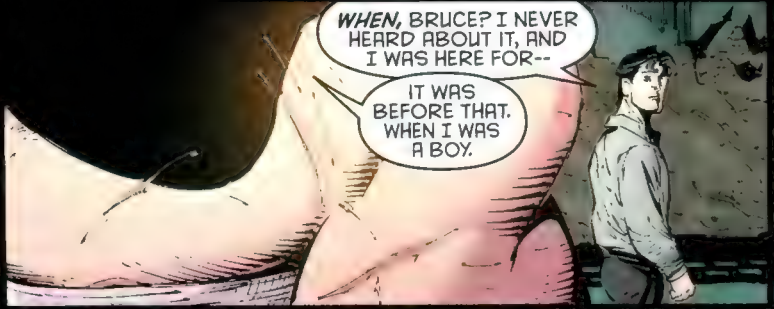
COMPUTER--RUN A SECONDARY TEST FOR SHALE.

RUNNING...

TAKE CARE, BRUCE. I HAVE A PLANE TO CATCH.



DICK... THERE IS NO COURT OF OWLS. I KNOW BECAUSE I LOOKED INTO IT.



WHEN, BRUCE? I NEVER HEARD ABOUT IT, AND I WAS HERE FOR--

IT WAS BEFORE THAT. WHEN I WAS A BOY.



ANALYSIS COM--

SHUT UP.

PAUSING...

IT WAS AFTER MY PARENTS WERE KILLED. IN THE WEEKS FOLLOWING THEIR MURDER...



"I WAS... LOST."

"I COULDN'T ACCEPT IT."

"YOU WERE A KID, BRUCE. I WAS THE SAME. HOW ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO ACCEPT--"

"NO, DICK..."



"...I COULDN'T ACCEPT THAT IT WAS *RANDOM*."

"THAT SOME PLAIN OLD JOE CHILL, SOME NO-NAME, HAD KILLED MY PARENTS OVER NOTHING BUT POCKET CHANGE AND PEARLS."



"DEEP DOWN I BELIEVED--I *KNEW*--THERE HAD TO BE SOMETHING *BIGGER* AT WORK."

"OF COURSE, GROWING UP,
I'D HEARD THE OLD LEGEND
OF THE COURT OF OWLS.



"I'D ASKED MY FATHER
ABOUT THEM, BUT
HE ALWAYS LAUGHED
OFF THE IDEA.



"BUT EVEN SO, IN THE DAYS BEFORE MY
PARENTS' DEATH, THERE'D BEEN A *SIGN*.

"A NEST. AN OWL NEST IN
THE ATTIC. HE'D SHOOED
THE BIRDS AWAY, BUT
THEY'D COME BACK.

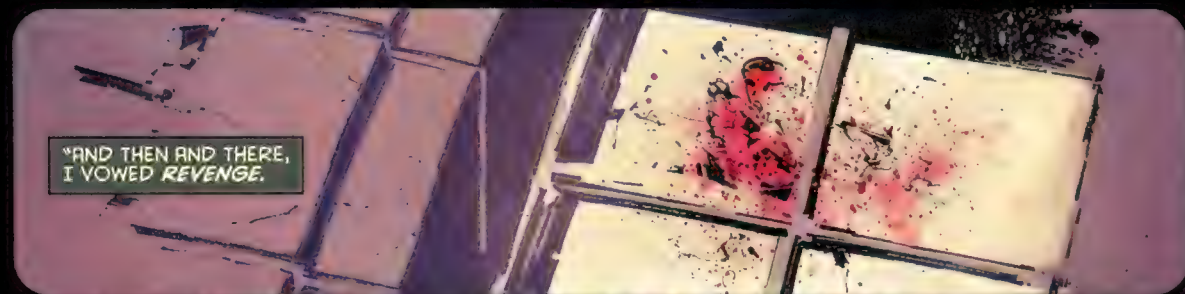


"IN AN OLDER VERSION OF THE
RHYME, THERE'S A LINE ABOUT
'HEEDING THE SIGNS,' THE
OMENS OF THE COURT.

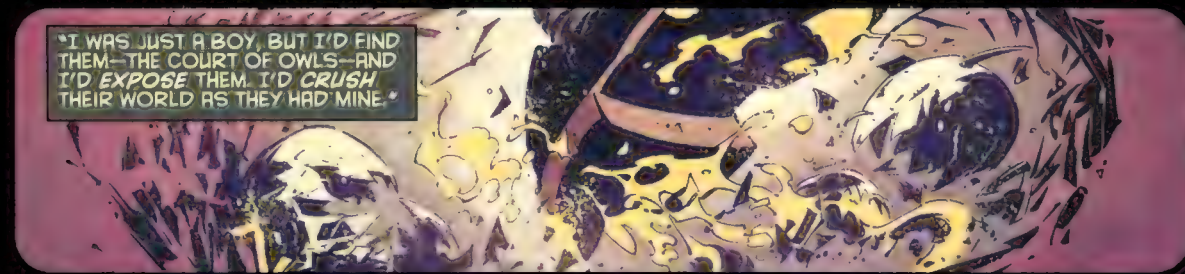
"IN THE AFTERMATH OF THEIR
DEATH, I SAW THE NEST
AS A SIGN, A *WARNING* MY
PARENTS HADN'T HEEDED.



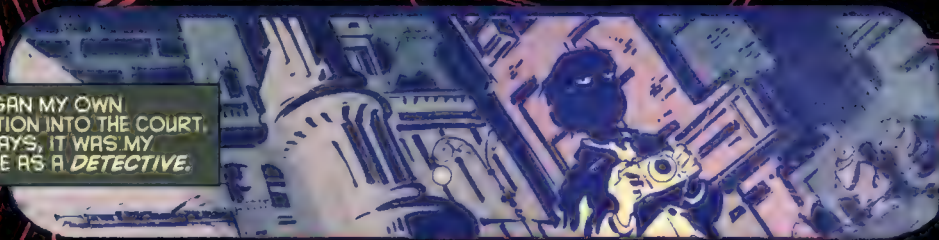
"AND THEN AND THERE,
I VOWED *REVENGE*.



"I WAS JUST A BOY, BUT I'D FIND
THEM—THE COURT OF OWLS—AND
I'D *EXPOSE* THEM. I'D *CRUSH*
THEIR WORLD AS THEY HAD MINE."



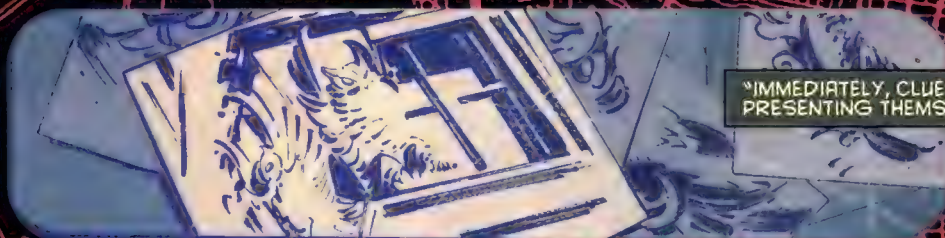
"SO I BEGAN MY OWN
INVESTIGATION INTO THE COURT.
IN MANY WAYS, IT WAS MY
FIRST CASE AS A *DETECTIVE*."



"AND I WAS
DETERMINED
TO SOLVE IT."



"IMMEDIATELY, CLUES BEGAN
PRESENTING THEMSELVES."



"IN A MATTER OF DAYS,
IT SEEMED EVERYWHERE I
LOOKED THERE WAS SOME
SIGN, SOME NEW PIECE OF
EVIDENCE POINTING TO
THE COURT'S EXISTENCE."



"SO I BEGAN
DELVING *DEEPER*."



"IF THE COURT WAS MADE
UP OF POWERFUL GOTHAM
FAMILIES, THERE WAS
NO BETTER PLACE TO
START LOOKING THAN MY
PARENTS' FRIENDS AND
BUSINESS PARTNERS."

0 1 2 3 MI.

GOTHAM CITY

*DESPITE HIS WORK AS A DOCTOR, MY FATHER HAD BEEN DEEPLY INVOLVED IN THE CIVIC MECHANICS OF GOTHAM. NOT JUST CHARITIES, BUT EVERYTHING FROM MUSEUMS TO THE GOTHAM SHIPYARD.

*ANYONE COULD BE ONE OF THE COURT.
NO ONE COULD BE RULED OUT.

*IN THE COURSE OF JUST A FEW WEEKS, I'D COMPILED NOTES ON SOME OF GOTHAM'S MOST PROMINENT FAMILIES. TO MY MIND--THE MIND OF A BOY DETECTIVE, ALL OF IT WAS EVIDENCE--EVIDENCE OF A FAR-REACHING CONSPIRACY AGAINST MY FAMILY.

*I'D EVEN LOCATED A BUILDING...AN OLD ABANDONED SOCIAL CLUB WITH A DOUBLE OWL ON THE CREST, A PLACE CALLED **HARBOR HOUSE**. IT WAS--"

"I KNOW IT."

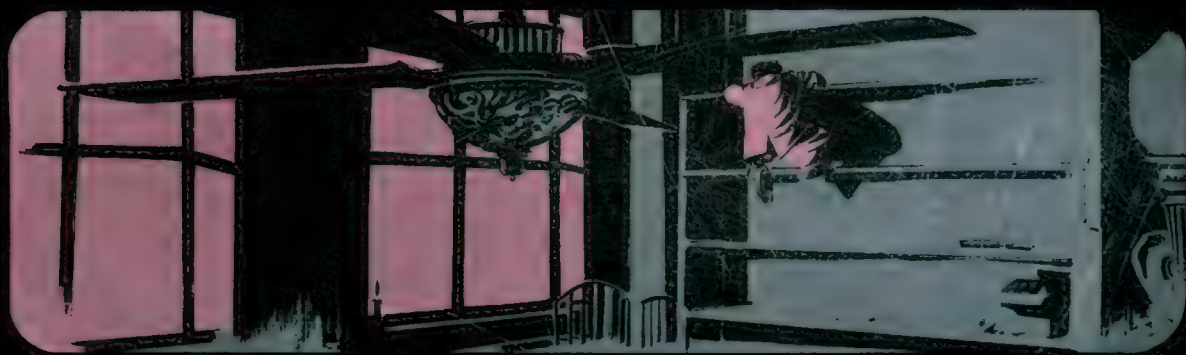
*ALL OF THE FAMILIES I SUSPECTED HAD BELONGED TO THE CLUB AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER.

*AND LOOKING AT THE SCHEMATICS OF THE BUILDING, I'D DISCOVERED A **ROOM** IN THE UPPER TOWER--WHAT LOOKED LIKE A WINDOWLESS MEETING PLACE, RIGHT ABOVE THE CREST OUTSIDE."

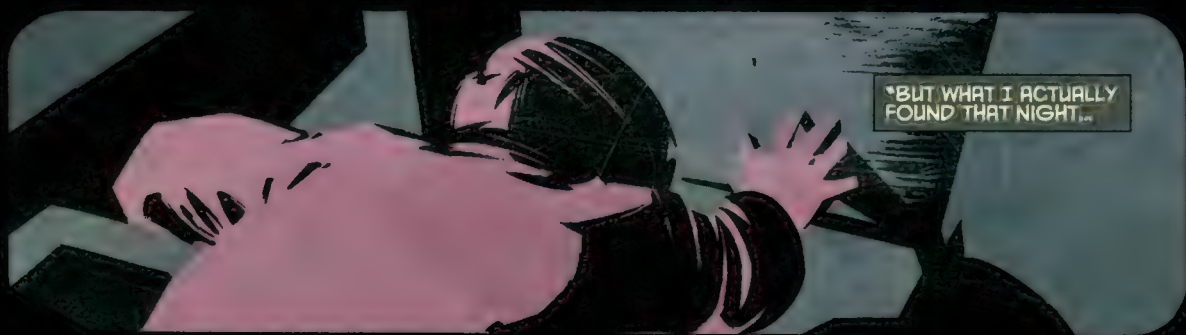
"I WAS SURE
THIS WAS IT."



"I HAD FOUND THE
COURT OF OWLS.
THE MEN BEHIND
MY PARENTS' DEATH."



"BUT WHAT I ACTUALLY
FOUND THAT NIGHT..."



"...UP THERE IN THAT SECRET
ROOM, WAS SOMETHING
MUCH MORE FRIGHTENING..."





*NOTHING.
NO ANSWERS.
NO VILLAINS.*



*JUST AN OLD, EMPTY
ROOM THAT HADN'T
BEEN USED IN YEARS.*

*I WAS SO SHOCKED
I DIDN'T SEE THE DOOR
CLOSE BY MY FOOT.*



*I WAS LOCKED
UP THERE FOR
OVER A WEEK.*



*WHEN ALFRED
FINALLY FOUND ME,
I WAS ALREADY
COMATOSE.*



I SPENT THREE WEEKS IN THE HOSPITAL, RECOVERING.

WHEN I WOKE UP, THOUGH, I'D LEARNED A VALUABLE LESSON. A LESSON I BUILT MY SKILLS AS A *DETECTIVE* ON.

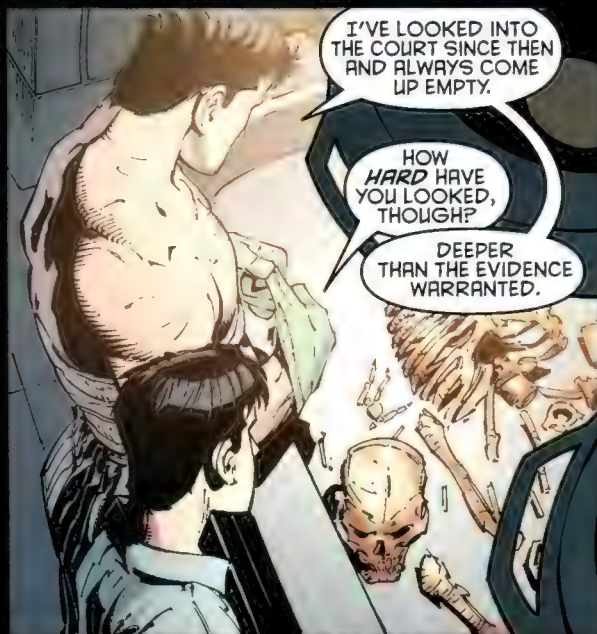


NEVER LET YOUR *EMOTIONS* GUIDE YOU ON A CASE.



I *NEEDED* THERE TO BE A COURT OF OWLS. SOME GREAT EVIL BEHIND MY PARENTS' MURDER. I LET THAT NEED GUIDE MY INVESTIGATION AND IT ALMOST KILLED ME.

YOU WERE JUST A *KID*, BRUCE.



I'VE LOOKED INTO THE COURT SINCE THEN AND ALWAYS COME UP EMPTY.

HOW *HARD* HAVE YOU LOOKED, THOUGH?

DEEPER THAN THE EVIDENCE WARRANTED.



BECAUSE THERE'S NEVER BEEN ANY.

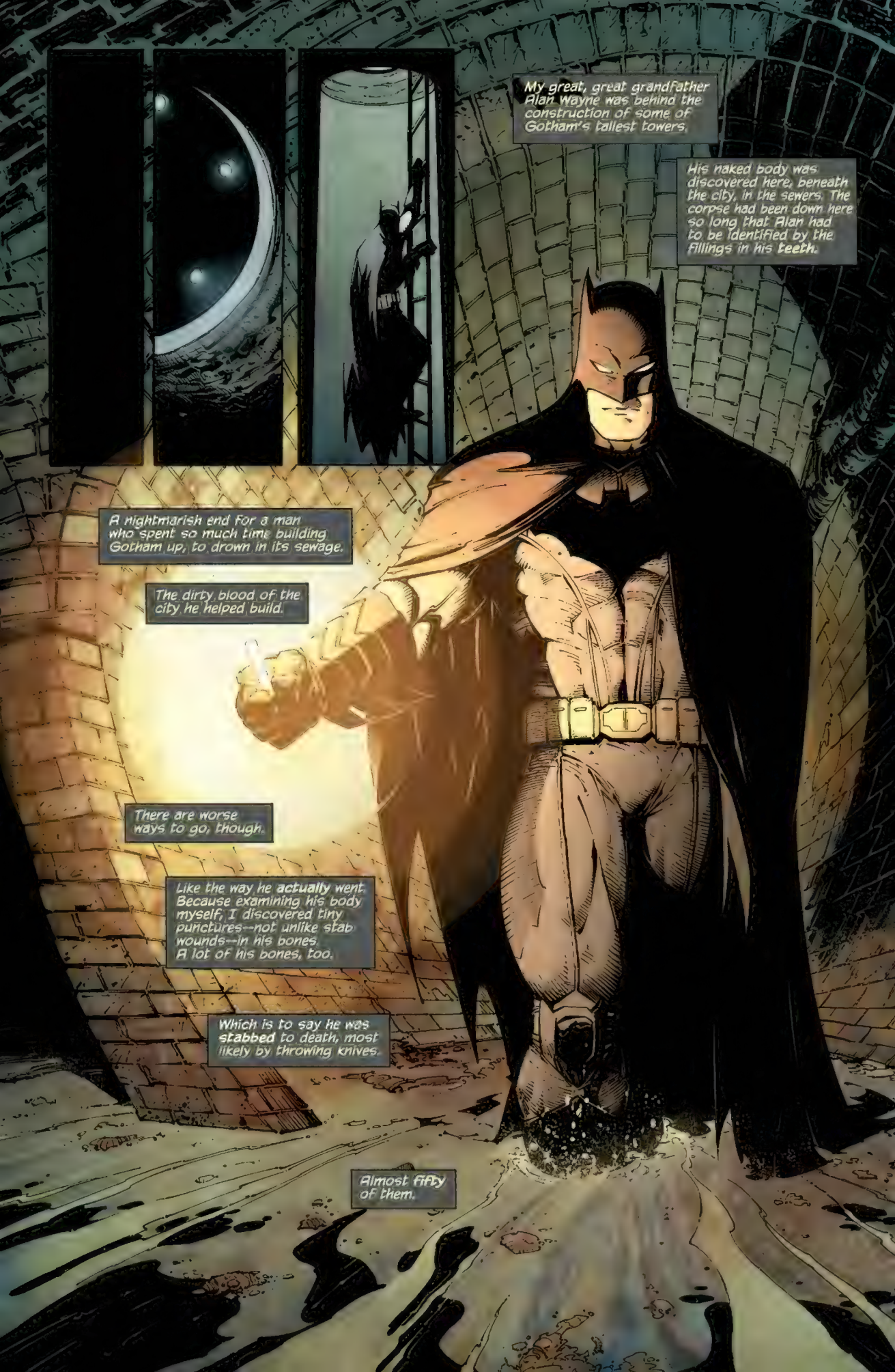
LOOK, BRUCE. NO ONE KNOWS GOTHAM BETTER THAN YOU. IT'S YOUR CITY. IT'S *BATMAN'S* CITY...

"...BUT IT'S ALSO NEARLY
FOUR HUNDRED YEARS
OLD, WHICH MEANS, OVER
THE YEARS, MAYBE IT
BELONGED TO **SOMETHING**
ELSE, TOO. SOMETHING
BIG. SOMETHING **DARK**."

"I HAVE
TO GO."

"I HAVE A LEAD TO
FOLLOW UP ON."





My great, great grandfather Alan Wayne was behind the construction of some of Gotham's tallest towers.

His naked body was discovered here, beneath the city, in the sewers. The corpse had been down here so long that Alan had to be identified by the fillings in his teeth.

A nightmarish end for a man who spent so much time building Gotham up, to drown in its sewage.

The dirty blood of the city he helped build.

There are worse ways to go, though.

Like the way he actually went. Because examining his body myself, I discovered tiny punctures--not unlike stab wounds--in his bones. A lot of his bones, too.

Which is to say he was stabbed to death, most likely by throwing knives.

Almost fifty of them.

*But I found something
else on his bones.*



A residue.




*Dust from a metamorphic
rock. Not unlike marble.*



*Strange, given that the sewer
system is constructed almost
entirely out of granite.*


*But that's Gotham.
Never ceases to--*



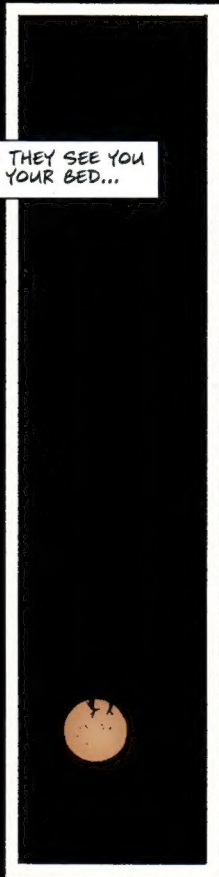


"THE COURT OF OWLS
WATCHES, WATCHES
ALL THE TIME."


"RULING GOTHAM FROM A
SHADOWED PERCH, BEHIND
GRANITE AND LIME."



"THEY SEE YOU AT
YOUR HEARTH."



"AND THEY SEE YOU
IN YOUR BED..."



"... SPEAK NOT A
WHISPERED WORD
ABOUT THEM..."

"... OR THEY'LL
SEND THE
TALON FOR
YOUR HEAD!"

WELCOME,
BATMAN, TO THE
LABYRINTH!

DC COMICS presents

BATMAN in

FACE the COURT

SCOTT SNYDER

writer

JONATHAN GLAPION

inks

pencils

GREG CAPULLO

RICHARD
STARRING & COMICRAFT'S

KATIE
KUBERT
assistant
editor

JIMMY BETANCOURT lettering

HARVEY RICHARDS
associate editor



CAPULLO & FCO

cover • Variant cover

MIKE CHOI

FCO colors

MIKE
MARTS
editor

BATMAN CREATED BY

BOB
KANE

Two weeks ago, we ended on the cliffhanger of Eddie Berganza getting shot. Rest assured, Eddie lives, snoring through a deep coma and eating through a tube. There's no way we'd kill him off. For starters, Blackest Night assured that death in the DCU is permanent. More important, there are so many suspects, the investigation would drag on for years.

Last week, Rachel Gluckstern detailed the average day of an editor, giving a real sense of what goes into the job. And since this column is supposed to provide a peek behind the scenes, I'm going to talk about meetings.

Wow. Meetings. Sounds boring, right? Wrong! The initial arcs of the New 52 books were designed to lay down the foundation for each title and character. Now it's time to start threading themes and continuity through the books, weaving them together to form a cohesive universe. Yesterday, I lunched with Bobbie Chase, Katie Kubert, Pat McCallum, Sean Mackiewicz and Chris Conroy. The topic was the Daemonites, those creepy alien villains making life difficult for the titular characters of GRIFTER and VOODOO.

The reason we have meetings like this is to find potential to enhance the individual stories, thread them through other books and find some unexpected directions for both story and book involvement. Would you believe the threat of the Daemonites extends to STORMWATCH, DEMON KNIGHTS, and even... BLACKHAWKS? Separately, the stories were quite strong and definitely exciting. Together, they form a cohesive epic that you can enjoy whether you read all these books or just stick with your personal favorites. The point is, life happens in the DCU, and it affects all who inhabit it.

So keep your eyes peeled for those titles as we ratchet up the threat of the Daemonites and take the story to places you can't imagine.

—Matt Idelson, who shot Eddie and rather enjoyed it.

Happy Holidays To All!

Including Eddie Berganza!



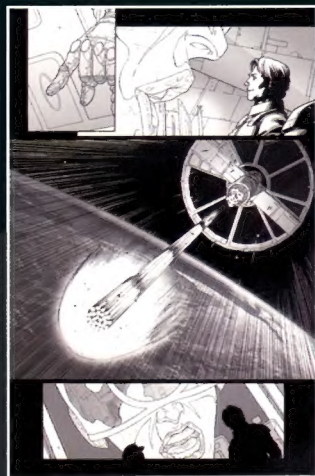
Voodoo #5 Cover



Grifter #6 Cover



Stormwatch #6 Cover



Interior page for Blackhawks #5

DC COMICS EDDIE BERGANZA Executive Editor BOB HARRAS VP-Editor-in-Chief DIANE NELSON President DAN DIDIO and JIM LEE Co-Publishers GEOFF JOHNS Chief Creative Officer JOHN ROOD Executive VP-Sales, Marketing and Business Development AMY GENKINS Senior VP, Business and Legal Affairs NAIRI GARDINER Senior VP-Finance JEFF BOISON VP-Publishing Operations MARK CHIARELLO VP-Art Direction and Design JOHN CUNNINGHAM VP-Marketing TERRI CUNNINGHAM VP-Talent Relations and Services ALISON GILL Senior VP-Manufacturing and Operations DAVID HYDE VP-Publicity HANK KANALZ Senior VP-Digital JAY KOGAN VP-Business and Legal Affairs, Publishing JACK MAHAN VP-Business Affairs, Talent NICK NAPOLITANO VP-Manufacturing Administration COURTNEY SIMMONS Senior VP-Publicity BOB WAYNE Senior VP, Sales



BATMAN 4, February, 2012. Published monthly by DC Comics, 1700 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BATMAN, DC Comics Subscriptions, P.O. Box 308, Congress, NY 10920. Annual subscription rate (12 issues) \$24.99. Canadian subscribers must add \$12.00 for postage and GST. GST # is R125921072. All foreign countries must add \$12.00 for postage. U.S. funds only. Copyright © 2012 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved. All characters featured in this issue, the distinctive likenesses thereof and related elements are trademarks of DC Comics. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. DC Comics does not read or accept unsolicited submissions of ideas, stories or artwork. This book is manufactured at a facility holding chain-of-custody certification. This paper is made with sustainably managed North American fiber. For Advertising and Custom Publishing contact dccomicsadvertising@dc.com. For details on DC Comics Ratings, visit dccomics.com/gv/ratings. Printed by Transcontinental RBW, Owen Sound, Ontario, Canada, 12/9/11.

DC Comics, a Warner Bros. Entertainment Company

THE PROLETARIAT

VARIANTS BY:
HALO & SCANDOG

